

## AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY BUSINESS INDICATORS, JULY 1994

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The new look July issue of *ACT Business Indicators* sees the introduction of some new data items including: monthly long-term unemployment and a more detailed breakdown of quarterly Consumer Price Index data.

Series updated since the June 1994 issue are: quarterly business expectations; quarterly population; monthly labour force; quarterly job vacancies; monthly industrial disputes; monthly housing finance; monthly building approvals; monthly price indexes of house building materials; monthly retail turnover; quarterly tourism indicators; monthly new motor vehicle registrations; and quarterly State accounts.

Notable movements include:

- In the short term, business expectations of sales growth in the ACT (1.3%) are weaker than the Australian figure of 1.9 per cent. However, businesses in the ACT (6.2%) expect to do much better than the Australian average of 3.3 per cent in the medium term.
- Trend gross State product for the ACT recorded a relatively slower rate of growth of 1.1 per cent for the March quarter 1994, compared with the higher growth rates experienced for the most part of 1993. Growth over the year still remains higher than the national rate and is the fourth highest of all the States and Territories.
- For the 12 months to December 1993 the population growth rate for the ACT was 1.2 per cent, above the national average of 1.0 per cent. The estimated resident population of the ACT at 31 December 1993 was 299,400, an increase of 200 people from the previous quarter.
- The trend unemployment rate for the ACT has fallen to 6.8 per cent. The figure is the lowest it has been since March 1993. This compares to the trend unemployment rate for Australia which has fallen to 9.9 per cent, an improvement of 0.1 per cent from May 1994.
- Job vacancy rates for the ACT in May 1994 increased by 26.7 per cent from the previous period and by 18.8 per cent from the same period last year. Nationally the increases were 7.6 and 63.6 per cent, respectively. This continues the trend of increasing job vacancies since August 1993 for the ACT, and November 1993 for Australia.
- The long-term unemployed in the ACT were estimated at 3,500 in June 1994 or 21 per cent of all unemployed. This compares with the proportion of 37 per cent for Australia.
- Building approvals show strong growth both in the ACT and nationally after declines in the previous month. In May 1994 the total value of building approvals in the ACT was \$60.5 million, an increase of \$13.5 million, or 28.7 per cent, on the previous month and 33.3 per cent on the same period last year.
- The price index of materials used in house building increased by 0.1 per cent from March 1994 and by 5.1 per cent since April 1993. This compares with national increases of 0.3 and 4.1 per cent, respectively.
- The trend estimates for retail turnover in the ACT have shown a decline of 0.6 per cent as opposed to an increase of 0.2 per cent nationally.
- Despite some volatility, the trend of room nights occupied has been upward since early 1990. After a fall in mid-1993, the latest two quarters have shown substantial increases. The trend of takings from accommodation has generally followed that of room nights but has been marginally stronger.
- Trend estimates of new motor vehicle registrations in the ACT fell by 1.9 per cent from April 1994. This is the second consecutive decline in the trend estimates for the ACT, however, nationally the

### INQUIRIES

- for further information about statistics in this publication and the availability of related unpublished statistics contact Leonie Peadon on Canberra (06) 207 0286 or any ABS State office.
- for information about other ABS statistics and services please refer to the back page of this publication.

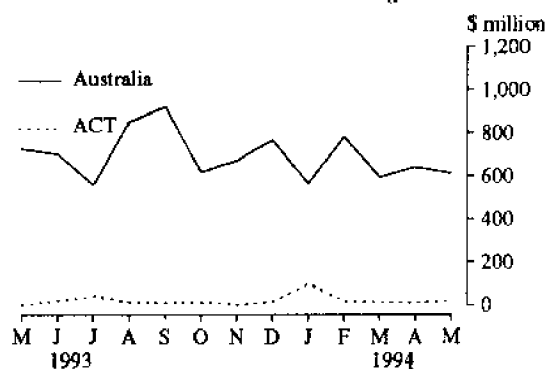
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS — *continued*

trend estimates for total vehicle registrations have been rising steadily since September 1993.

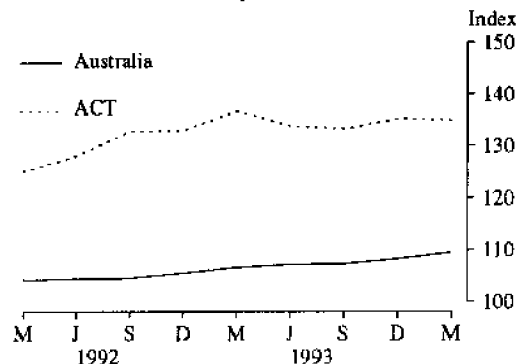
**DALMA JACOBS**  
Statistician Australian Capital Territory

## SELECTED BUSINESS INDICATORS

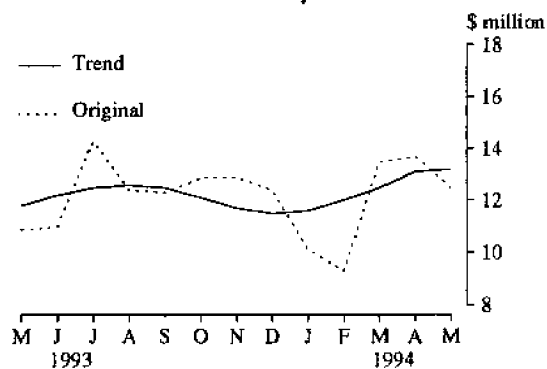
**BUILDING APPROVALS**  
Non-residential buildings



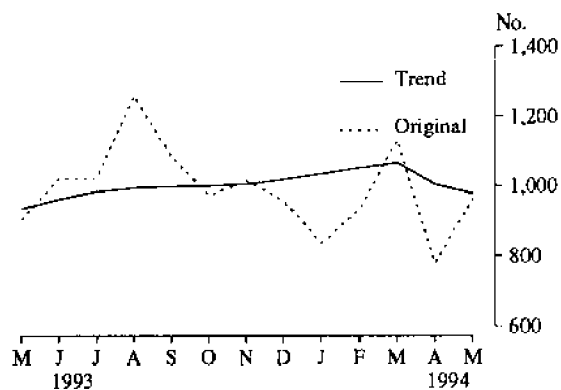
**PRICES**  
Established house price index (1989-90=100)



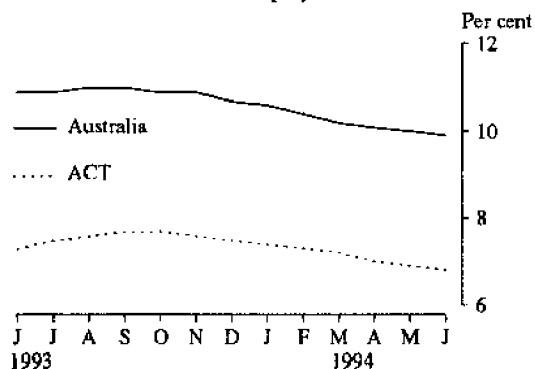
**RETAIL TURNOVER**  
Hotels and liquor stores



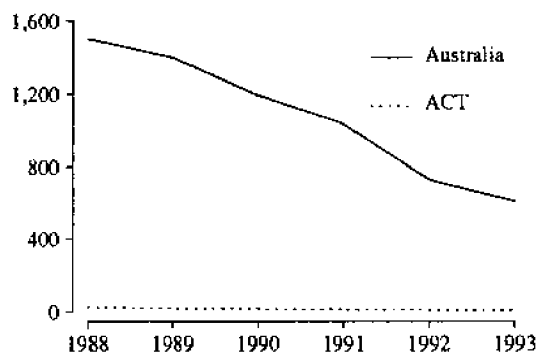
**MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATIONS**



**LABOUR FORCE**  
Trend unemployment rates



**INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES**  
Number of disputes which occurred during the year



**TABLE 1. AUSTRALIAN BUSINESS EXPECTATIONS: SALES,  
DECEMBER QUARTER 1993/JUNE QUARTER 1995  
EXPECTED AGGREGATE CHANGE  
(per cent)**

| <i>Period</i>      | <i>Australian<br/>Capital<br/>Territory</i> | <i>Australia</i> |
|--------------------|---|------------------|
| <b>Short-term</b>  |   |                  |
| December 1993      | 1.1   | 3.6              |
| March 1994         | 0.1   | -1.4             |
| June 1994          | 1.6   | 1.9              |
| September 1994     | 1.3   | 1.9              |
| <b>Medium-term</b> |   |                  |
| September 1994     | 1.5   | 2.9              |
| December 1994      | 2.7   | 3.1              |
| March 1995         | 3.8   | 3.9              |
| June 1995          | 6.2   | 3.3              |

**TABLE 2. AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY BUSINESS INDICATORS, JULY 1994**

| Indicator  | Unit | Australian Capital Territory |                                 |   | Australia     |                                 |   |
|--|------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|---------------|---------------------------------|---|
|  |      | Latest figure                | Change from previous period (%) | Change from same period previous year (%) | Latest figure | Change from previous period (%) | Change from same period previous year (%) |
| <b>POPULATION, VITAL AND LABOUR</b>                          |      |                              |                                 |   |               |                                 |   |
| POPULATION, March qtr 94                                     | '000 | 299.4                        | 0.1                             | 1.2                                       | 17 746.6      | 0.2                             | 1.0                                       |
| Natural increase   | no.  | 775                          | -2.5                            | -12.1                                     | 32 918        | 2.6                             | —   |
| Net migration  | no.  | -523                         | -623.0                          | -5.3                                      | 4 123         | -76.3                           | 42.6                                      |
| Total increase   | no.  | 252                          | -71.8                           | -23.6                                     | 37 041        | -25.1                           | 3.4                                       |
| <b>LABOUR FORCE, June 94 (preliminary)</b>                   |      |                              |                                 |   |               |                                 |   |
| Original series  |      |                              |                                 |   |               |                                 |   |
| Employed   | '000 | 153.5                        | -0.5                            | -2.2                                      | 7 892.7       | 0.2                             | 2.8                                       |
| Unemployed   | '000 | 10.4                         | -4.6                            | -13.3                                     | 839.2         | -1.3                            | -8.2                                      |
| Unemployment rate(a)   | %    | 6.3                          | -4.5                            | -11.3                                     | 9.6           | -1.0                            | -9.4                                      |
| Participation rate(a)  | %    | 71.9                         | -0.8                            | -1.4                                      | 62.7          | 0.0                             | 0.5                                       |
| Long-term unemployed (May 94)                                | '000 | 3.5                          | -2.9                            | 12.9                                      | 40.9          | -1.0                            | -3.3                                      |
| Long-term unemployed as percentage total unemployed (May 94) | %    | 20.9                         | -20.2                           | -11.8                                     | 36.6          | 1.4                             | -6.6                                      |
| Trend series   |      |                              |                                 |   |               |                                 |   |
| Employed   | '000 | 152.8                        | -0.1                            | 1.5                                       | 7 868.6       | 0.1                             | 2.9                                       |
| Unemployed   | '000 | 11.1                         | -1.8                            | -6.7                                      | 865           | -0.8                            | -7.3                                      |
| Unemployment rate(a)   | %    | 6.8                          | -1.4                            | -6.8                                      | 9.9           | -1.0                            | -9.2                                      |
| Participation rate(a)  | %    | 71.9                         | -0.3                            | -0.8                                      | 62.7          | —                               | 0.6                                       |
| JOB VACANCIES, May qtr 94                                    | '000 | 1.9                          | 26.7                            | 18.8                                      | 49.4          | 7.6                             | 63.6                                      |
| <b>INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES IN PROGRESS, March 94</b>             |      |                              |                                 |   |               |                                 |   |
| Working days lost  | '000 | —                            | -100.0                          | —   | 61            | 33.0                            | -61.1                                     |
| Days lost per '000 employees (year ended March 94)           | no.  | 80                           | -1.2                            | 300.0                                     | 94            | -14.5                           | -47.5                                     |
| <b>BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION</b>                             |      |                              |                                 |   |               |                                 |   |
| <b>HOUSING FINANCE, April 94</b>                             |      |                              |                                 |   |               |                                 |   |
| Secured commitments to individuals for                       |      |                              |                                 |   |               |                                 |   |
| Original series  |      |                              |                                 |   |               |                                 |   |
| Construction of dwellings                                    | \$m  | 12.4                         | 6.0                             | -21.0                                     | 760.8         | -12.1                           | 41.5                                      |
| Purchase of new dwellings                                    | \$m  | 17.3                         | -30.0                           | 174.6                                     | 200.5         | -21.6                           | 38.9                                      |
| Purchase of established dwellings                            | \$m  | 69.2                         | -18.6                           | 13.8                                      | 3 066.5       | -22.3                           | 29.1                                      |
| Total new housing commitments                                | \$m  | 107.9                        | -19.0                           | 6.6                                       | 4 027.7       | -20.5                           | 31.8                                      |
| Seasonally adjusted series                                   |      |                              |                                 |   |               |                                 |   |
| Total new housing commitments                                | \$m  | 103.1                        | -8.6                            | 8.2                                       | 4 415.5       | 3.5                             | 33.7                                      |
| Trend series   |      |                              |                                 |   |               |                                 |   |
| Total new housing commitments                                | \$m  | 110.0                        | 0.6                             | 22.8                                      | 4 367.2       | 1.8                             | 34.5                                      |
| <b>BUILDING APPROVALS, May 94</b>                            |      |                              |                                 |   |               |                                 |   |
| Dwelling units   | no.  | 359                          | 47.1                            | -4.0                                      | 18 641        | 34.5                            | 25.4                                      |
| Value of new residential                                     | \$m  | 31.1                         | 19.6                            | -9.1                                      | 1 585.0       | 32.9                            | 31.1                                      |
| Value of residential alterations and additions               | \$m  | 5.8                          | -9.4                            | 3.6                                       | 250.3         | 40.0                            | 36.6                                      |
| Value of non-residential                                     | \$m  | 23.5                         | 61.0                            | 319.6                                     | 612.2         | -4.6                            | -15.6                                     |
| Value of total building                                      | \$m  | 60.5                         | 28.7                            | 33.3                                      | 2 447.5       | 21.6                            | 15.6                                      |
| <b>BUILDING COMMENCEMENTS, December qtr 93</b>               |      |                              |                                 |   |               |                                 |   |
| New houses   | no.  | 410                          | -32.5                           | -39.0                                     | 31 703        | -3.0                            | 3.6                                       |
| Value of houses commenced                                    | \$m  | 49.8                         | -24.1                           | -26.3                                     | 2 892.7       | -1.4                            | 7.6                                       |
| Value of non-residential building commenced                  | \$m  | 34.5                         | -45.5                           | -2.8                                      | 2 115.7       | 14.3                            | 11.5                                      |
| <b>PRICE INDEXES</b>   |      |                              |                                 |   |               |                                 |   |
| Established house price index (March qtr 94) (1989-90=100.0) |      | 134.9                        | 0.3                             | -1.4                                      | 109.6         | 1.1                             | 2.8                                       |
| Price index of house building materials (April 94) (b)       |      | 151.4                        | 0.1                             | 5.1                                       | 153.6         | 0.3                             | 4.1                                       |

TABLE 2. AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY BUSINESS INDICATORS, JULY 1994 — continued

| Indicator  | Unit        | Australian Capital Territory |                                 |   | Australia     |                                 |   |
|--|-------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|---------------|---------------------------------|---|
|  |             | Latest figure                | Change from previous period (%) | Change from same period previous year (%) | Latest figure | Change from previous period (%) | Change from same period previous year (%) |
| <b>PRICES, WAGES AND CONSUMER SPENDING</b>                           |             |                              |                                 |   |               |                                 |   |
| <b>CONSUMER PRICE INDEX, March qtr 94 (1989-90=100.0)</b>            |             |                              |                                 |   |               |                                 |   |
| Food   |             | 111.9                        | 0.4                             | 1.3                                       | 109.8         | 0.3                             | 0.7                                       |
| Housing  |             | 98.8                         | -0.4                            | -1.4                                      | 93.7          | 0.1                             | -0.7                                      |
| Transport  |             | 115.4                        | -1.8                            | 0.9                                       | 113.2         | -0.3                            | 1.7                                       |
| All groups   |             | 111.4                        | 0.1                             | 1.2                                       | 110.4         | 0.4                             | 1.4                                       |
| <b>AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS, February 94</b>                          |             |                              |                                 |   |               |                                 |   |
| Original series  |             |                              |                                 |   |               |                                 |   |
| Males  | \$          | 712.5                        | 3.2                             | 7.0                                       | 625.6         | 1.1                             | 2.4                                       |
| Females  | \$          | 490.4                        | 2.6                             | 4.3                                       | 416.8         | 2.0                             | 1.7                                       |
| Total persons  | \$          | 601.3                        | 2.9                             | 6.2                                       | 529.0         | 1.4                             | 2.1                                       |
| Trend series   |             |                              |                                 |   |               |                                 |   |
| Males  | \$          | 706.5                        | 2.3                             | 6.5                                       | 621.4         | 0.2                             | 2.4                                       |
| Females  | \$          | 482.2                        | 0.2                             | 3.4                                       | 411.0         | —                               | 1.8                                       |
| Total persons  | \$          | 594.4                        | 1.5                             | 5.4                                       | 523.3         | 0.1                             | 2.1                                       |
| <b>RETAIL TURNOVER, May 94</b>                                       |             |                              |                                 |   |               |                                 |   |
| Original series  |             |                              |                                 |   |               |                                 |   |
| Grocers, confectioners, tobacconists                                 | \$m         | 52.8                         | 2.3                             | 5.2                                       | 2 461.6       | 0.5                             | 2.4                                       |
| Department and general stores  | \$m         | 23.5                         | 5.4                             | -4.1                                      | 897.5         | 9.1                             | -0.0                                      |
| Hotels, liquor stores, licensed clubs                                | \$m         | 12.5                         | -8.8                            | 14.7                                      | 1 022         | -3.2                            | 9.1                                       |
| All other stores   | \$m         | 76.7                         | -0.1                            | -3.4                                      | 3 944.4       | 3.3                             | 5.6                                       |
| Total  | \$m         | 165.5                        | 0.7                             | 0.3                                       | 8 325.5       | 2.2                             | 4.4                                       |
| Trend series   |             |                              |                                 |   |               |                                 |   |
| Grocers, confectioners, tobacconists                                 | \$m         | 53.8                         | 0.0                             | 7.4                                       | 2 524.2       | 0.1                             | 3.2                                       |
| Department and general stores  | \$m         | 24.4                         | 1.2                             | 3.8                                       | 927.7         | 1.1                             | 4.4                                       |
| Hotels, liquor stores, licensed clubs                                | \$m         | 13.2                         | 3.1                             | 11.9                                      | 1 082.5       | 0.9                             | 9.2                                       |
| All other stores   | \$m         | 78.3                         | -2.1                            | 0.3                                       | 4 073.8       | -0.1                            | 6.7                                       |
| Total  | \$m         | 169.7                        | -0.6                            | 3.8                                       | 8 608.2       | 0.2                             | 5.7                                       |
| <b>HOTELS, MOTELS AND GUEST HOUSE ACCOMMODATION, December qtr 93</b> |             |                              |                                 |   |               |                                 |   |
| Original series  |             |                              |                                 |   |               |                                 |   |
| Room nights  | no.         | 215.6                        | 7.9                             | 4.5                                       | 8 503.1       | 1.7                             | 7.6                                       |
| Takings at current prices  | \$m         | 18.3                         | 10.2                            | 7.0                                       | 709.5         | 5.5                             | 10.0                                      |
| Takings at 1989-90 prices  | \$m         | 16.6                         | 9.9                             | 6.4                                       | 590.6         | 1.2                             | 4.8                                       |
| Seasonally adjusted series   |             |                              |                                 |   |               |                                 |   |
| Room nights  | no.         | 206.8                        | 3.6                             | 3.7                                       | 8 378.4       | 4.2                             | 7.5                                       |
| Takings at current prices  | \$m         | 17.6                         | 5.4                             | 6.0                                       | 689.8         | 6.2                             | 9.8                                       |
| Takings at 1989-90 prices  | \$m         | 16                           | 6.0                             | 5.3                                       | 574.3         | 1.7                             | 4.7                                       |
| Trend series   |             |                              |                                 |   |               |                                 |   |
| Room nights  | no.         | 208.5                        | 7.1                             | 3.7                                       | 8 338.4       | 3.0                             | 7.4                                       |
| Takings at current prices  | \$m         | 17.6                         | 6.0                             | 6.7                                       | 686.0         | 4.7                             | 9.7                                       |
| Takings at 1989-90 prices  | \$m         | 15.5                         | 2.0                             | 5.4                                       | 570.4         | 0.3                             | 4.4                                       |
| <b>NEW MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATIONS, May 94</b>                       |             |                              |                                 |   |               |                                 |   |
| Motor vehicles   | no.         | 962                          | 23.7                            | 6.4                                       | 53 205        | 20.8                            | 18.8                                      |
| Seasonally adjusted motor vehicles                                   | no.         | 976                          | 8.6                             | —   | 51 020        | -0.1                            | 14.7                                      |
| Trend motor vehicles   | no.         | 978                          | -1.9                            | 4.6                                       | 50 163        | 0.9                             | 10.0                                      |
| <b>INTERSTATE ROAD FREIGHT MOVEMENT, March qtr 94</b>                |             |                              |                                 |   |               |                                 |   |
| Originating  | '000 tonnes | 45.8                         | -1.7                            | 14.5                                      | 4 492.3       | -3.6                            | -0.2                                      |
| Receiving  | '000 tonnes | 134.4                        | -1.2                            | -25.7                                     | 4 492.3       | -3.6                            | -0.2                                      |
| <b>AGGREGATE INDICATORS</b>  |             |                              |                                 |   |               |                                 |   |
| <b>STATE ACCOUNTS, March qtr 94</b>                                  |             |                              |                                 |   |               |                                 |   |
| Gross State product at current prices                                | \$m         | 2 226                        | -9.4                            | 6.3                                       | 104 131       | -8.6                            | 6.0                                       |
| State final demand at average 1989-90 prices                         | \$m         | 2 847                        | -6.3                            | 5.4                                       | 92 402        | -7.7                            | 4.2                                       |
| Private final consumption expenditure                                | \$m         | 1 266                        | -9.9                            | 3.7                                       | 64 396        | -7.9                            | 5.1                                       |
| Private gross fixed capital expenditure and components               | \$m         | 241                          | -16.9                           | -0.8                                      | 14 914        | -10.6                           | 9.3                                       |
| Trend series   |             |                              |                                 |   |               |                                 |   |
| Gross State product at current prices                                | \$m         | 2 358                        | 1.1                             | 6.3                                       | 108 350       | 1.5                             | 6.0                                       |
| State final demand at average 1989-90 prices                         | \$m         | 2 989                        | 0.6                             | 2.5                                       | 97 162        | 1.3                             | 3.2                                       |
| Private final consumption expenditure                                | \$m         | 1 345                        | 1.4                             | 5.8                                       | 67 189        | 1.6                             | 5.4                                       |
| Private gross fixed capital expenditure and components               | \$m         | 273                          | -1.4                            | -8.4                                      | 15 669        | 1.2                             | 4.7                                       |

(a) Change shown in terms of percentage points. (b) ACT data 1986-87 = 100.0, Australia 1985-86 = 100.0.

Source: ABS Catalogue Nos: 3101.0, 5242.0, 5609.0, 6203.0, 6302.0, 6321.0, 6354.0, 6401.0, 6408.0, 6416.0, 8501.0, 8635.0, 8635.8, 8731.0, 8752.0 and 9303.0.

TABLE 3. ACT IN RELATION TO THE REST OF AUSTRALIA

| <i>Indicator</i>                                      |      | <i>Latest period</i> | <i>NSW</i> | <i>Vic.</i> | <i>Qld</i> | <i>SA</i> | <i>WA</i> | <i>Tas.</i> | <i>NT</i> | <i>ACT</i> | <i>Aust.</i> |
|---|------|----------------------|------------|-------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|-----------|------------|--------------|
| <b>LABOUR FORCE</b>                                   |      |                      |            |             |            |           |           |             |           |            |              |
| Employed persons (original)                           | '000 | June 94p             | 2 635.4    | 1 976.3     | 1 431.2    | 635       | 789.3     | 194.9       | 77.2      | 153.5      | 7 892.7      |
| Unemployment rate (trend)                             | %    | June 94p             | 9.6        | 10.4        | 9.1        | 10.6      | 8.4       | 10.2        | 6         | 6.3        | 9.6          |
| <b>BUILDING APPROVALS</b>                             |      |                      |            |             |            |           |           |             |           |            |              |
| Dwelling units approved                               | no.  | May 94               | 5 433      | 3 029       | 5 591      | 1 103     | 2 664     | 348         | 114       | 359        | 18 641       |
| Value of non-residential building approved            | \$   | May 94               | 183.5      | 151.1       | 145.9      | 26.7      | 58.7      | 13.3        | 9.4       | 23.5       | 612.2        |
| Value of all buildings approved                       | \$   | May 94               | 772.1      | 528.1       | 632.7      | 117.4     | 272.4     | 42.2        | 22.1      | 60.5       | 2 477.5      |
| <b>ENGINEERING CONSTRUCTION</b>                       |      |                      |            |             |            |           |           |             |           |            |              |
| Value of engineering construction work done           | \$m  | Dec. qtr 93          | 974.9      | 505.2       | 717.7      | 184.3     | 457       | 60.4        | 60.1      | 41.9       | 3 001.5      |
| <b>CONSUMER PRICE INDEX (1989-90=100.0)</b>           |      |                      |            |             |            |           |           |             |           |            |              |
| Food  |      | Mar. qtr 94          | 110.2      | 107.8       | 111.2      | 112       | 110.2     | 112.6       | 112.6     | 111.9      | 109.8        |
| Housing   |      | Mar. qtr 94          | 94.7       | 92.2        | 100.1      | 91.6      | 86.9      | 93.3        | 103.6     | 98.8       | 93.7         |
| Transport   |      | Mar. qtr 94          | 110.8      | 114.9       | 112        | 117.6     | 113.9     | 111.9       | 111.3     | 115.4      | 113.2        |
| All Groups  |      | Mar. qtr 94          | 109.1      | 111.2       | 110.8      | 113.6     | 108.6     | 111.9       | 111.4     | 111.4      | 110.4        |
| <b>AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS</b>                        |      |                      |            |             |            |           |           |             |           |            |              |
| Full-time adult ordinary time                         | \$   | Feb. qtr 94          | 630.80     | 604.70      | 581.00     | 597.30    | 608.00    | 592.90      | 628.90    | 713.30     | 648.90       |
| <b>RETAIL TRADE</b>                                   |      |                      |            |             |            |           |           |             |           |            |              |
| Retail turnover (trend)                               | \$m  | May 94               | 3 009.5    | 2 063.4     | 1 521.6    | 642.9     | 870.4     | 216         | n.p.      | 169.7      | 8 608.2      |
| <b>HOTELS, MOTELS &amp; GUEST HOUSE ACCOMMODATION</b> |      |                      |            |             |            |           |           |             |           |            |              |
| Room nights occupied (trend)                          | no.  | Dec. qtr 93          | 2 826.2    | 1 286.1     | 2 254.5    | 480.4     | 753.5     | 251.6       | 277.7     | 208.5      | 8 338.4      |
| <b>NEW MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATIONS</b>                |      |                      |            |             |            |           |           |             |           |            |              |
| Original  | no.  | May 94               | 19 996     | 11 951      | 10 154     | 3 235     | 5 328     | 1 017       | 562       | 962        | 53 205       |

Note: Figures in the above tables are either preliminary, final or revised to previously published figures. Users should check the latest relevant publication or with ABS Information Services if the status of the statistic is important. Symbols used in this publication: — nil or rounded to zero; n.a. - not available; p - preliminary data; n.p. - not available for publication.



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